

<sup>1</sup> On the question about being allowed to only speak as "personal opinions and not as a representative of the agency" - I said disagree because I'm an (b) (6) and therefore a spokes person. Our response unit's relationship with the (b) (6) folks should be considered the gold standard.

<sup>2</sup> I think general training for (b) (6) scientists on the line between science and policy would be very helpful for preparing (b) (6) scientists for talking about their work outside of the agency.

<sup>3</sup> No Opinion

<sup>4</sup> NA

<sup>5</sup>

EPA staff should be allowed to speak freely with the media. (b) (6)  
(b) (6) should be seeking interviews, and not seeking to suppress interviews and content. Everything has to go through management and public affairs office, often watering down and reducing what can be communicated with the public. (b) (6)

(b) (6)  
I think the EPA has a vice grip on external communication which in turn is not transparent to the public.

<sup>6</sup> I don't have any judgement to base this on.

<sup>7</sup>

Just keep the communication lines open between our (b) (6) and scientists as needed.

<sup>8</sup> No comments

<sup>9</sup> Need media specialists that will help convert complex science into language the average person and reporter would understand.

<sup>10</sup>

Most of our scientists need to take media training to handle reporters' questions.

<sup>11</sup> use social media more to interact with the media and general population

<sup>12</sup> I think more training opportunities would be great.

<sup>13</sup> It is valuable for media training to cover how to navigate the inevitable jump made from scientific conclusions to policy or economic conclusions.

<sup>14</sup>

There is no training for speaking to the media, and no opportunities provided. We are not allowed to even respond to email media requests. No media requests were accepted. No social media was allowed. What a waste.

<sup>15</sup> NA

<sup>16</sup>

In the past two years, we were constantly "reminded" NOT to talk to the media.

<sup>17</sup> Not applicable.

<sup>18</sup> No basis to judge

<sup>19</sup> many of these questions do not apply to all and there is not a N/A to choose from. Survey was not put together too well.

<sup>20</sup> none

<sup>21</sup>

training of scientific staff to the extent needed for interaction with the media. Also to avoid inconsistencies in response of the agency to media inquiries, as the media frequently contacts multiple offices at once on the same issue

<sup>22</sup>

I think every scientist should have a comms or media rep with them when speaking with the media. (b) (6) science is unique in that it is nearly always relevant to a policy activity. I firmly believe that (b) (6) scientists should only speak about the science, and it is very challenging to do that, even for people with media training.

<sup>23</sup> no comment

<sup>24</sup> Two things. Scientific staff should agree with (b) (6) and managers as to the facts are about a site/situation and should be aware of agenda's other than EPA's hidden in the questions from others.

25

Consider changing this survey to better allow "support" functions to answer questions. I am not a scientist and am not involved in the creation of scientific work. But I am an (b) (6) who needs to understand it and it's shortcomings as well as be able to communicate to the public and (b) (6). Questions about how (b) (6) does science are irrelevant; but I could answer questions about what I've seen in other programs.

26

Over the decades, it's common that employees' feelings about an Administration's policy choices influence or inform their views on legality, morality and scientific integrity of the Administration's decisions. Polls like this and other communications on scientific integrity could take some time and discuss each and how they are different, so that discussions on scientific integrity are distinct from feelings about policy choices.

27 I have 0 experience or training in this area. Seems like communication on this topic is lacking.

28 I have no knowledge of the scientific integrity policy and find this survey to be a huge waste of my time.

29

The media training I took was years ago. It needs to be provided to more scientists.

30

I don't use social media so training about how to interact on social media could be helpful should I need to use social media to discuss or interact with scientists or the media.

31 No comment

32 NA

33 Increase social media presence by engaging the social media outlets.

34

EPA scientists generally need better written and oral skills before interacting with the media or the public. Also, EPA scientists need to be coached on how to interact transparently with the media/public and not talk down.

35 N/A

<sup>36</sup> I think it is OK to have media savvy individuals be the intercessors between scientists and the media, but not political appointees.

<sup>37</sup>

I am now allowed to speak to media which wasn't true under past administration.

<sup>38</sup> ONLY certain (b) (6) personnel should be engaged with the media.

<sup>39</sup>

The Branch Chief often decides who speaks to media. It is not a choice made by the scientist. Even if the media directly contacts the scientist. I think that speaking to the media should be somewhat controlled, otherwise we would sound inconsistent. However, it is often a privilege reserved for certain scientists and not others. You can be an expert, but without the PhD, one does not have the privilege of conveying scientific opinion.

<sup>40</sup> Be honest, truthful, remove the political 'spin'.

<sup>41</sup>

In one of the previous Qs, you didn't give survey takers the option of conveying that you were contacted by the media but not allowed to speak to them.

<sup>42</sup>

Although, we can put a disclaimer in our presentation to indicate I only present my own opinion, our presentation material needs to go through clearance process. Therefore, no information could be freely expressed without management approval.

<sup>43</sup> speaking to the media is not part of my job

<sup>44</sup>

As stated early, I have had no issues the past two years, but my experiences the previous 10-12 years have been marginal. Project managers have often not been able to openly discuss their findings with stakeholders and/or the media.

<sup>45</sup> Leadership

<sup>46</sup> This survey could have allowed for skipping questions, since I am a (b) (6) that is not involved in scientific issues.



47

Most EPA scientists, myself included, shy away from speaking out on social media because we suspect it is not permitted, or are unsure of what is allowed.

48

No comments.

49

I think training in real world interactions is very necessary.

50

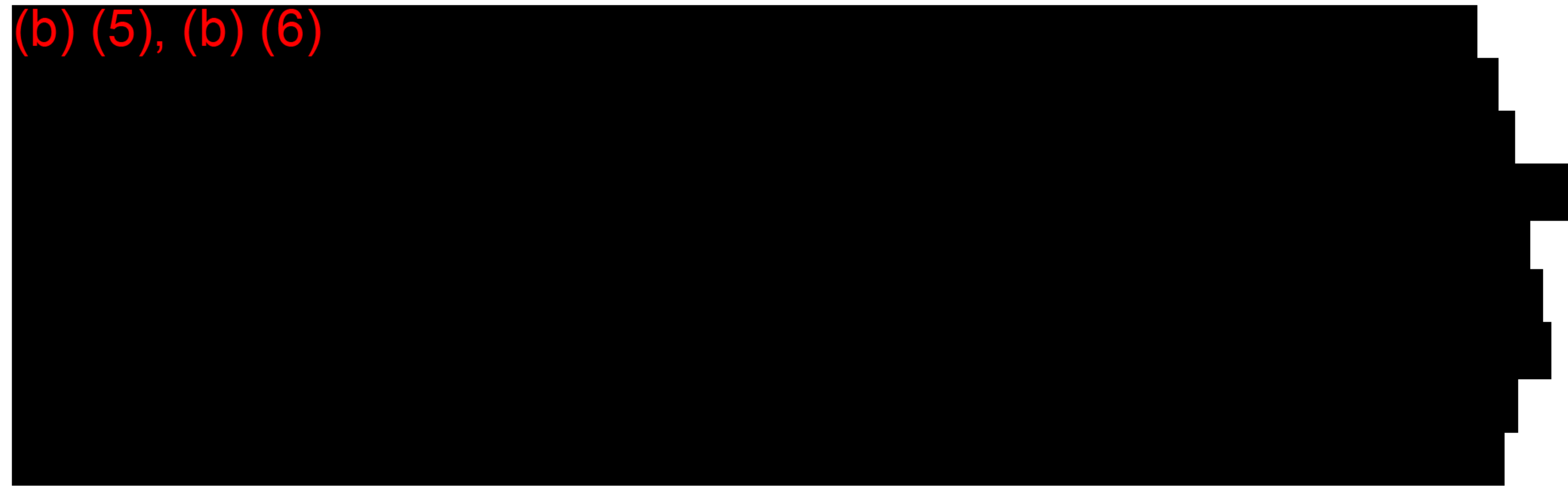
The epa believes in evolution and therefore the basis for the science at the agency is flawed. Everything the agency does is designed for a political agenda, so the science supports the political agenda.

51

scientists should have maximum flexibility as they feel comfortable.

52

(b) (5), (b) (6)



53

During 2019 and 2020 there was no difference between your scientific opinion and the Agency opinion. You could not have a difference of opinion from your Agency as a scientist. Agency scientists should be able to discuss a variety of perspectives in a public forum. This comes at a potential cost to the Agency, however, and could make it more difficult to accomplish its mission. Another area where some kind of balance needs to be struck.

<sup>54</sup> I will not go out of my way to share with the media. However, if they ask questions, it would be nice to answer the questions. We used to be able to respond, but I understand that the agency wants one voice.

<sup>55</sup>

I am not in a scientific position; however, I know we were very suppressed during the last administration. I know my colleagues care deeply that their work is honest, transparent, and accurate. The last few years have been hard. There needs to be a way to better protect Agencies and employees from political interference.

<sup>56</sup> I've been told by senior career staff to not include my employer details on any social media platforms in any way because it can be used against me. Advice that I have taken to protect myself.

<sup>57</sup>

I find it important for the Agency to be proactive and have a consistent message about the threats before us and to be honest to the public in an effort to bring people together. While differing opinions are welcome, the science has to move us forward otherwise we will have to settle for very slow progress.

<sup>58</sup> Adequate training.

<sup>59</sup> No comment

<sup>60</sup>

The desire by (b) (6) and the media to simplify complex data to make it more understandable to the general public can be problematic. Also (b) (6) and the media's desire to post things quickly can be problematic. Some data and interpretation does not simplify well and all data interpretation requires some time. On the other hand, Agency scientist could be better at simplifying data results and interpretations generally speaking to make them more understandable to the general public.

<sup>61</sup> I am unsure of my role/approval for this type of activity.

<sup>62</sup> Media should be held accountable by law to report truthfully without misrepresentation nor taking statements out of context.

<sup>63</sup> (b) (6), including reoccurring public meetings. I have found that the more you prep and develop formal responses the less you are trusted. The more you have dialogue and present what you know to the best of your ability, in laymen terms, the more you are trusted (i.e. it emphasizes your Scientific Integrity).

<sup>64</sup> N/A

<sup>65</sup> N/A

<sup>66</sup>

sharing information is fine, but should follow ethics rules, and the protocol of the agency.

<sup>67</sup> None.

<sup>68</sup>

The optics of media interaction may necessitate a higher level of interaction with managers and possibly others (e.g., (b) (6) or (b) (6) media specialists) resulting in additional work for the staff member often without any commensurate benefit. Sometimes it results in additional follow-up (with reporter, or management debrief) leading to increased workload for staff.

<sup>69</sup>

We have media people. The training we get is to refer any and all questions to that person. I agree with this. I would never express my opinion as an EPA representative even to a family member. I do not discuss my work with anyone, including friends or family. I am sworn to do that. To do otherwise is totally illegal. We take training on that. I do not express my personal opinion because of the idea that it could be misconstrued as an EPA opinion. I do not discuss my work with anyone outside my division, which is a subset of (b) (6).

<sup>70</sup> we need media training...

<sup>71</sup> I will not comment for fear of reprisal.

<sup>72</sup> Don't have any suggestions.

<sup>73</sup> This is not part of our job, and there is an office that handles this and everything that comes in should be directed to them in accordance to the guidance that we receive regarding how to handle media requests.

<sup>74</sup> n/a

<sup>75</sup> NA

<sup>76</sup> None

<sup>77</sup> Get better political appointees...

<sup>78</sup> I am worried that I would say something that isn't consistent with EPA policy or regulation

<sup>79</sup> NA

<sup>80</sup> I think an enhanced relationship with the (b) (6) folks agency wide especially as it relates the the Data Quality Act.

<sup>81</sup>

I think we need to use social media more. Even in a personal capacity to discuss ongoing work and research (while not disclosing any decisions about policy).

<sup>82</sup> N/A

<sup>83</sup> (b) (6) is the culprit of creating a culture of (b) (5), (b) (6). Not all of them, but most of them seem to have little care in reducing emissions.

<sup>84</sup> I think EPA needs to do more to promote our science in the media.

<sup>85</sup>

EPA is known among journalists as the worst government agency in terms of transparent communication between scientists and the media. We are discouraged from talking with media and the communications staff are so risk averse that we have very little opportunity to communicate without hand holding and continued rebuffing. This needs to improve within EPA to be a higher level science institution.

<sup>86</sup> n/a

<sup>87</sup> Scientists should have training to communicate about limitations. What does the science say?



<sup>88</sup> I do not normally speak to the public in an official capacity, but if I did I would want training or assistance from communications staff.

<sup>89</sup> I have no suggestions.

<sup>90</sup> no comments

<sup>91</sup>

(b) (6)

<sup>92</sup> The command and control in public affairs is really strong. Managers without scientific experience or public affairs specialist without scientific or program specific experience are always tasked to respond to media instead of the scientist/engineer who has the most knowledge.

<sup>93</sup> No interaction with media so no basis to judge

<sup>94</sup>

Scientists should know where their expertise lies and should refrain from providing comment on issues that may lie outside their knowledge base and expertise. For instance, providing comment for a newsletter on a project/effort that the scientist was involved with that supports EPA's mission should not be suppressed, but encouraged. How to balance effective communication and scientific integrity may require additional thinking on what is and is not appropriate.

<sup>95</sup>

Under the last administration, staff were basically prohibited from speaking to congressional representatives or media without strict control from (b) (6)

<sup>96</sup>

Over the past 10 years, leadership has greatly reduced the ability or approval for staff/managers to speak to the media. every interaction with the media is scrutinized and monitored. This isn't necessarily a bad thing but our level of leadership involvement/approval for this is crazy. Part of the problem is likely that our (b) (6) leadership are not technical--they don't understand the material and are paralyzed by it as a result. This doesn't help us get the word out.

<sup>97</sup> EPA employees are consistently coerced from speaking with the media. An employee who does so will be retaliated against, even if the form of the retaliation is hidden in the form of damage done to their career prospects and opportunities denied them. In fact, that's the usual approach because it can be denied and it doesn't give further emphasis to the issue.

<sup>98</sup>

I have given many presentations at meetings where media (i.e., (b) (6)) were present. I have not had much one-on-one meetings with the media...the last time was in (b) (6) and (b) (6) was present. I did answer that I am comfortable talking with the media, but it would not hurt to be trained to do it properly. (Although I am not asking for that training as I am not sure I will be doing it that often).

<sup>99</sup> I had very little media contact over the time period, just a handful of "hot issues" that we queued up in case queries arose. But my colleagues and I fielded a lot of general questions (b) (6). It's not clear whether how many were media inquiries.

<sup>100</sup> Clearer guidelines are needed covering the use of social media, particularly as it relates to discussing current/ongoing research.

<sup>101</sup>

For my entire EPA career ((b) (6)), we have been told by managers that we are not allowed to talk directly to the media and we should always refer questions to (b) (6). This adds to the culture of fear and secrecy at the agency.

<sup>102</sup>

There is a robust vetting of what stories/work efforts could be shared with the Media. If not approved than there is no interaction with the media. Most if not all contentious or risky work efforts would not be approved to be shared with the Media. (b) (6) are very conservative. If a story looked at all risky, it would not be approved to be discussed with the Media.

103

I have been at EPA for over (b) (6). I used to be able to talk directly to the media about complicated EPA technical work efforts. Now we have to write the answers which must be edited and distilled through (b) (6) and the messages are smoothed over to ensure we do not upset interest groups.

104 N/A

105 Free Open source data without having to go through the formal channels. (citizens science)

106 Additional media training is always beneficial.

107 No comment or suggestions.

108 There should be some more options to be able to discuss issues where staff has information which could benefit the public. Many times there is such a rigid control that only the Public Relations person speaks (if at all) and the information is too limited or rigid.

109 'please make us aware who we should contact in advance ;

110 Am not allowed to interact with media.

111

I don't think I would ever feel comfortable speaking off-script to the general public, even if prefacing remarks with disclaimers about my opinion vs. agency position.

112 we are not allowed to communicate with media-

113 Not applicable

114

(b) (5)

115

External meeting and speaking requests (outside of normal job-related interactions) currently require Regional and HQ tracking (and approval depending on the topic). So, it is becoming somewhat involved to present at a scientific meeting or speak to a high school class, much less speak to the media, at least at the Regional staff level.

<sup>116</sup> N/A

<sup>117</sup> N/A

<sup>118</sup> As a scientist who supports (b) (6), I generally don't talk specifics about my work to anyone outside my organization. We are trained to be this way due to potential litigation issues.

<sup>119</sup>

Often the idea of One EPA is used to justify restricting EPA scientists from unsupervised communication with the media. And the concept from Ethics training that there is no "professional capacity", it's either personal or as government representative, is carried over to this arena. As it is now, the disclaimer that one's statements are not necessarily representing the position of the Agency is either totally ignored or it's a joke. Either don't require it, or if it's there make it mean what it already says.

<sup>120</sup> I have no comment at time

<sup>121</sup> A short guide would be helpful.

<sup>122</sup>

1. The scientific integrity program needs to be able to offer confidentiality to folks that bring potential issues forward for consideration. 2. Tone at the top counts. If the bosses all the way up to the Administrator do not sign up to honoring the scientific process in an "absolutely, positively 110% yes we support our scientists!" sense, then there may be fear of retaliation that could stifle the process and that will directly affect the public's perception of integrity at the Agency as a whole.

<sup>123</sup> (b) (6) has an important role in guiding those interactions.

<sup>124</sup>

earlier in my career i was the point person on (b) (6) and speaking to the media was a part of my job responsibilities. at this point in my career i much prefer (b) (6) to handle the face-to-face interactions with the media based on my written information. in general i found reporters often do not grasp the key points when these are delivered verbally. i find my written materials are likely to be reported out to the public more accurately.



<sup>125</sup> the idea of talking to the media scares me. i do not want to be misquoted nor misunderstood. I am not a specialist and could not answer questions geared to a specialist.

<sup>126</sup> Media interaction N/A to my position.

<sup>127</sup>

I am the regional lead for (b) (6). Generally, media requests are funneled from (b) (6) to the RA or Division Director. Given it's controversy, I'm okay with that approach. I would also like to be able to give more presentations without fear of reprisal personally.

<sup>128</sup> None.

<sup>129</sup> It is very difficult to convey scientific findings to the lay public and there is a lot of qualifiers to any fact. It is best to route outreach to the (b) (6) unless the audience is small/known and they feel free to ask questions since it turns into a bidirectional educational exercise.

<sup>130</sup>

The past administration really hurt scientific credibility across the government. It is crucial we do everything we can to prove that staff credibility and integrity never went away, it was only suppressed. We need to do everything we can to get the public to understand that science is not a belief system, like religion. It transcends opinion so we need to be very careful not to spin it to make it sound like opinion. I see far too many EPA press releases that read like someone's opinion and not scientific facts.

<sup>131</sup> I hope my experience with bad manager behavior is an anomaly, but I fear that it will continue if these managers are not stopped. I have great fear that I will be attacked for even saying this here.

<sup>132</sup> haven't done any media outreach n/a

<sup>133</sup> N/A

<sup>134</sup>

EPA should be more proactive/transparency engaged with the media and public about science, so that the public understanding EPA works and support its mission.

<sup>135</sup> Please don't ask (b) (6) to fill out surveys like this

136

Having summaries or factsheets released simultaneously with products helps provide the media with factual information and diminishes the amount of media questions/requests with tight deadlines. The layers of approval tends to be the largest constraint to meet deadlines. Being upfront with the media on how long it will take to generate a response is also crucial.

137 It is frustrating to communicate science with the media who seems more interested in headlines.

138 n/a

139

I have produce (b) (6) that are reviewed by the scientific community. All papers where peer reviewed by engineers or scientist. All my research is on Research Gate for public access. I have received good response from the scientist in the U.S. and outside the U.S. (b) (6) of my research papers have been cited a few times for clarity and conformity to scientific standards. But EPA will EPA is in a bubble, and anything not understood or comprehended by a MBA or attorney is considered trash, or repressed. Therefor, I will not publish while working for EPA.

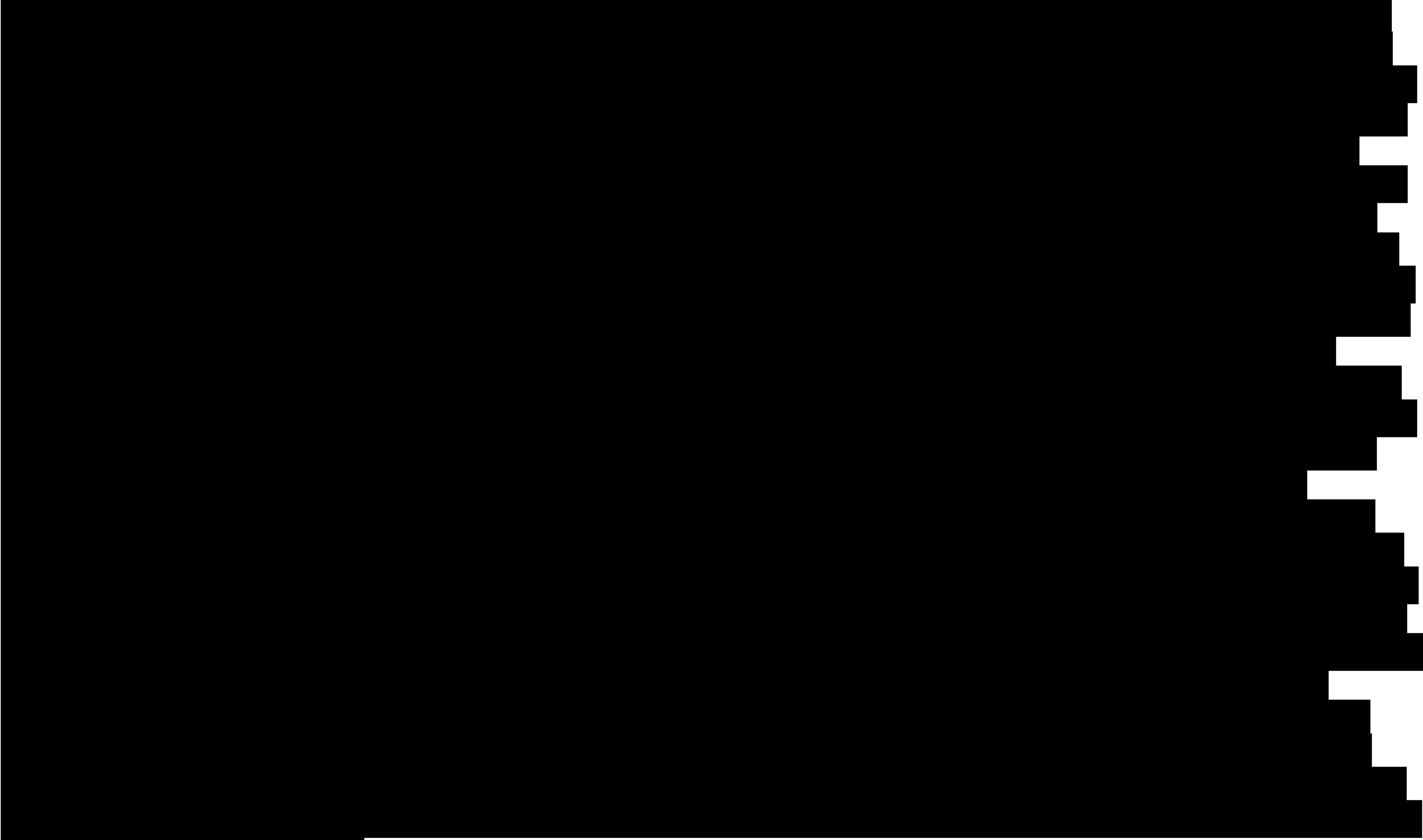
140

I firmly believe lapses in scientific misconduct (specifically, falsification, plagiarism) are a personal decision. They are not contingent on staffing or workload pressures, and anyone who tries to say that is lying. That said, our agency has presented an conundrum to scientific integrity as a whole. (b) (5)

141 In the previous section, I had to give responses to advance in the survey. But, I am not a scientist at EPA, so I don't think my responses will be helpful.


142 EPA scientists should interact with the media using pre-approved content.

Clearance is a mess. It highly differs across Centers. (b) (5), (b) (6)



Making our research available to the public is a federal requirement. What are the other federal science agencies doing to comply with the Holdren Memo?

Why is EPA creating processes in a silo, lets talk to USGS, NASA, USDA, etc to see what they are doing. They may have better ideas. \* I (b) (5), (b) (6)



144 Having scientists in leadership positions. Not lawyers , not political scientist like (b) (6) at (b) (6)

145 Media training is a great idea.


146 N/A

147 Why don't you base the Scientific Integrity Program on scientific principles instead of doing a survey? Try introducing some positive and negative feedback controls to improve the process and measure the results. Change something and then see how the results change. Repeat. Or just do another survey in a couple of years and tell everyone how much things have improved. Something tells me you will choose the latter.

148 There is an opportunity to grow the Agency's activity and visibility on social media at multiple levels.



I've had staff who are contacted by media for input on stories of quick turnaround times. Often, the time to respond is too long, and those opportunities are lost. (b) (5)



<sup>150</sup> How do I separate my personal identity as a scientist vs. being a scientist at the EPA?  
These seem very intertwined.

<sup>151</sup> EPA Scientists should be allowed to interact with media.

<sup>152</sup>

I was not aware before reading the policy that I was allowed to speak with the media--in practice this has always been handled by a communications person in our office.

<sup>153</sup> New Employee, not enough experience with EPA to comment.

<sup>154</sup> I remember there was training years ago in working with the media (pre-internet era) but don't recall a push for such training recently.

As noted earlier, it's often data interpretation (not the data itself) that could cause internal disagreement between EPA scientists and management on high-profile issues the media may report on. I hope the revised SIP can encourage EPA scientists to discuss their research with the media with (b) (6) present with an understanding that they are allowed to share their expert interpretation of the findings, but should clarify which aspects of the research are subject to interpretation. One objective of the SIP could be to ensure the media is informed about any data interpretations that underlie EPA rulemakings if it's not transparent. This way, if external parties disagree with the interpretation (or the assumptions that underlie the interpretation), they know what to focus on if they decide to initiate a legal challenge.

<sup>156</sup> It was my understanding under the previous Administration that outside speaking engagements were frowned upon, even if I were speaking in a personal capacity and not as an Agency representative.

<sup>157</sup> No suggestions at the moment.

<sup>158</sup> No comments.

<sup>159</sup>

In (b) (6), we are not allowed to talk to the media. Some scientists and engineers are not super articulate when responding to random questions, so I think in some cases, especially when the information is not really detailed or in-depth or nuanced, it can be advantageous to have (b) (6) work with the scientist/engineer to formulate answers and take the lead in responding.

<sup>160</sup> Training should be provided on how to deal with the media

<sup>161</sup> NA

<sup>162</sup> Training

<sup>163</sup> na

164

I think I could have benefited more from a media/scientist relationship training when onboarding. That is an area that is still somewhat murky to me about what my role should be in interacting with the media and especially social media.

165

Allowing EPA experts to speak about their area of expertise lends credibility to the Agency. If media is denied access to those experts and/or those experts are viewed as being stifled there is an immediate lack of trust. If you want the media to portray the science correctly, they need to trust the person giving them the information.

166 USEPA needs to address misinformation of scientific material that our coregulators mis-share.

167 Media training for new employees.

168 n/a

169 Continue to research and communicate

170 Office of external affairs coordinates responses to media inquiries.

171 Ensuring coordination with the proper (b) (6)

172

(b) (6) I am not at liberty to share my views with the media. This survey will get biased results from staff in this position.

173

EPA scientists do not all have sufficient skills or experience in explaining the complex scientific issues to a non-scientist or in responding to rapid questions. I witness that in briefings and interagency meetings all the time. For that reason, I would suggest caution in evaluating or encouraging EPA scientists interactions with the media.

174 Scientists, as natural introverts, can find it difficult speaking to outside sources. Having spokespeople responsible for this could be helpful.

175

EPA scientists and engineers who can talk with the media should be screened. In areas of science and engineering where there is a process to be tested to obtain a license as a professional in that field, spokespersons should be required to have that level of expertise. In working with my colleagues, it is easy to see that quality of educational background is sorely lacking in some.

176

I think you should consider having a rotating ad hoc/guest member or two to the scientific integrity committee. While including the senior leadership from regions is great given each person's diverse background and experience, you may be missing other unique perspectives from agency scientists, public health professionals, or related disciplines. I am also confused as to how the deputy scientific integrity officials are chosen aside from being in senior leadership positions - it may be helpful to explain this selection process (and what makes them the most ideal candidates for these roles) - basically, further increase the transparency of the system.

177

Ask, why are (b) (5)

?

178

I feel well supported by our public affairs staff. I know I can ask them to help me navigate media, and they are responsive and smart.

179

More decision-making transparency would be welcomed.

180

The control of information transfer is too strict and sometimes used against the scientist. The requirement to have a handler from DC (or at all) is control. I have generally had a good relationship with the handlers and have appreciated the exercise of honing language and have used the inherent protection of a handler during interviews on controversial topics the strict requirement is often burdensome and not relevant to low level topics and many presentations.



<sup>181</sup> Media training is a good idea. Also, staff needs support when they have been reached out for comments. If we are reached out for comments is good to allow us to do it if we want to and if this is about our work.

<sup>182</sup> NA

<sup>183</sup> training on risk communication

<sup>184</sup> EPA tends not to defend itself when media reports information incorrectly, e.g., the (b) (5) [REDACTED] a few years back.

<sup>185</sup>

Scientists rather than communications staff should discuss science issues with the media.

<sup>186</sup> We do not share our data or analyses with the media.

<sup>187</sup> We completed a scientific document in 2020 but were told to do a "soft" release limiting the visibility and recognition for our workgroup.

<sup>188</sup> Training sounds useful. I didn't realize that was available.

<sup>189</sup>

(b) (6) [REDACTED] should have the ability to speak to media when asked as site experts.

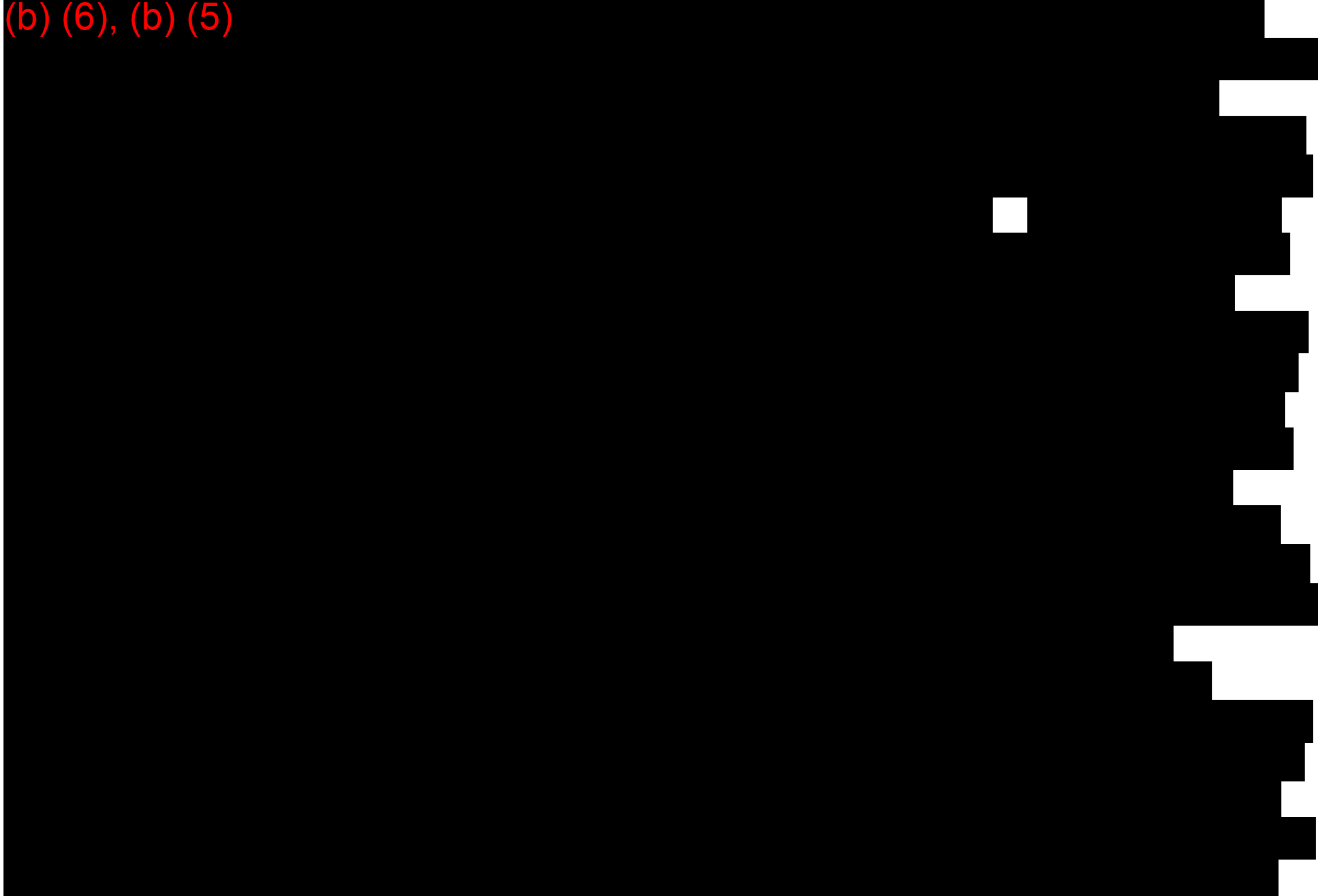
Proper notifications should occur, but we should be able to do so.

<sup>190</sup>

Clear guidance and even training on how our scientists can share their info on their personal social media platforms (to encourage doing, but appropriately) would be great.

<sup>191</sup> It would be great to give employees training on how to interact with the media and social media as an EPA employee and also outside of our duties as EPA in a professional/personal capacity

(b) (6), (b) (5)



As (b) (6), I will refrain from

commenting on the science that supported these regulatory revisions; but I do question the scientific integrity supporting them.

<sup>193</sup> Is there a basic set of guidelines specific to EPA that could be made available? I have spoken with media extensively in my previous work but have no idea what my position at EPA would require and how much I could say about my current research if it is not published yet.

<sup>194</sup> Media training

<sup>195</sup> Taking the time to give reporters background and context is very important.

<sup>196</sup> More open publishing of fully QA'd data, freely made available to everyone.

<sup>197</sup> Basic training on what is or what is not appropriate when media or press approach (while in the field in my case).

<sup>198</sup> This survey is too long to be meaningful.

<sup>199</sup> NA

200

I fully understand responsibilities for speaking publicly in my capacity as an EPA employee. The big challenge is related to voicing my personal opinions. I do not feel I can share my personal opinions in social media because I will be linked to EPA. (I recognize others speak freely - it would be helpful to have more communication on how to navigate this during a federal career.

201

I had an interaction with a media outlet ((b) (6)) where Senior Leadership did not allow the (b) (6) (subject matter expert) to participate in a phone call or video call, but could only answer questions verbally. It seemed to create some distrust with the media and we received numerous rounds of written questions rather than, presumably, one video/phone call.

202

Training on how to handle media interaction, as well as encouragement and opportunities to do so

203

N/A

204

I have no contributions.

205

Not a scientist

206

Only in the cases of FOIA do I get involved.

207

Interacting with the media is always tricky. The media typically has a political bent or personal bent by the media person or their organization that they want certain sound bites to proffer a position. That puts us scientists in a bad position. My personal opinion is that we should have media specialist interact with the media and protect our scientist from getting caught up in the "gotcha game" the media plays all the time.

208

No comment

209

Learning proper media language. Include external affairs employees to help out with media question. Best if can get media questions before hand and respond in writing back to them instead of a direct interview with them.



210

I think its important for EPA to be involved in these conversations with the media, especially on social media. Because the public tends to believe whatever they hear 'first', whether it's true or not. So it would be really important for EPA to provide clear information first, if possible. Or to quickly refute any false claims with scientific fact.

211

We are not allowed to directly talk to the media. All messaging is controlled.

212

Our (b) (6) should lighten-up on their restrictions on allowing senior scientists to speak directly with the media. It's no better now with the current Administration than what it was with the past several Administrations. It is ridiculous that well-known, revered scientists such as myself are strictly PROHIBITED by (b) (6) from directly answering questions from the news media. I feel as if I am being treated as if I were a child. Many of us do.

213

Well, I don't think EPA scientists should have direct interactions unless through official sanctioned channel and Public Information Officer.

214

The issue here is many staff work in a bubble and may not be aware that the way they phrase something may be taken out of context by the media or may impact another part of the agency. In the world of click bait media that we now all live in, there are gotcha journalist looking for a headline. While I do believe it is important to have interactions with the media, giving a spotlight to a disgruntled employee because a peer review committee did not agree with them (as a dissenting opinion) would undermine the reason why we have a peer review processes to reach consensus on scientific questions. Some oversight of media interactions is needed. Requiring talking points and prior approval for some media interactions seems appropriate

<sup>215</sup> Researchers present their work at conferences and meetings, is there specific verbiage to use if a reporter requests more information regarding the presentation; not specifically an interview.

<sup>216</sup> i've been told to not do it so i avoid it

<sup>217</sup> NA I am not a scientist

<sup>218</sup>

When scientists are contacted by the media whether directly or through EPA channels it indicates a real interest in the Agencies research. The decision to allow and council the scientist should be made by those who have no conflict of interests and are qualified to translate the science into lay person interests and language.

<sup>219</sup> the different layers of review are not transparent and make it difficult to respond in a timely manner

<sup>220</sup> Short 1-2 minute PSAs video and audio

<sup>221</sup> (b) (6) does not allow staff to talk to media in (b) (6)

<sup>222</sup>

Working with the media is a "game" that requires non-scientists to play -- Scientists provide too many details to the media and Congress so this is why budget and program analysts and communications people do the bulk of the speaking. They understand of the art of saying something which really means not much of anything just to keep a dialogue. This is not a game that I share. I'd rather speak factually and truthfully then try to master the game of "media speak."

<sup>223</sup> We should be using social media as a way to communicate regulations to regulated entities, instead of mailings, for example.

<sup>224</sup>

In (b) (6) (2019 2020) it was nearly a "gag order" to not speak to media or public officials. Some relationships with public officials took a hit (from a staff level), as the previous administration restricted communication - even in the simplest form.

<sup>225</sup> NA

<sup>226</sup> EPA scientists have to be careful with what they present to the media. Misinformation can be catastrophic.

<sup>227</sup> None

<sup>228</sup>

easier access to social media, less stringent for social media posts. need to be able to have fun and get a following instead of posting the same old boring stuff no one reads.

<sup>229</sup>

This is always a touchy area as we work for EPA. IMO, we should feel free to speak about our science/results in our official capacity to the extent that we wish to do so. And, assuming the conclusions are final and not in a draft stage.

<sup>230</sup>

The public needs more info about what EPA really does-- the scope of our agency. There is a narrow view and a lot of misperception. For example, many think EPA just provides restrictions and cumbersome regulations on industry and businesses. EPA actually has many facets and divisions doing research, investigation, testing, protecting water supplies, supporting emergency response and homeland security, etc. but these get little publicity.

<sup>231</sup> NA

<sup>232</sup> I agree that effectively speaking with the media about sensitive scientific information requires some expertise, and I haven't really received training. In the Bush administration I was asked to speak with media, and the EPA communications staff that joined me on the phone bullied the reporter in an embarrassing way throughout the interview .. drawing comment later to other scientists about how bad it was. The environment around public communication is sufficiently toxic or overcautious that I definitely wouldn't make speaking with the media as an EPA employee something I would seek to do. I would prefer that if a situation came up that called for me to speak with the media, EPA could had a more positive, encouraging and supportive stance ... perhaps borne of the idea that if EPA scientists can speak to the media, we might appear more transparent and human as an agency. The message I've received over (b) (6) is this: we don't really want to you to talk outside of EPA, especially to the media, except in controlled professional settings, and even that we're nervous about.

<sup>233</sup> Not applicable to my duties.

<sup>234</sup> none

<sup>235</sup> EPA's deliberative process and legal positions need to be protected. Regardless of the administration, scientists talking openly with the media without legal and public affairs experts assistance, can jeopardize that protection.

<sup>236</sup> Our politicians need to try harder to make policy decisions, in the absence of political pressures.

<sup>237</sup> Stop telling EPA employees that they are not allowed to cold-call the media about EPA products once the products are out (as a private activity).

<sup>238</sup> Members of the media and the particular media they represent vary widely in their understanding of science and in their overall integrity. EPA scientists need to be made wary of that fact.

<sup>239</sup> More training on scientific communication to various audiences. We are generally comfortable with peer interactions; however, how to best communicate with managers, stakeholders, and the public could be improved.



240 I am fine with my comms office and (b) (6) acting as an intermediary

241 I am prohibited from speaking with the media. I must direct all inquiries to the (b) (6)  
[REDACTED]. A (b) (6) Officer will contact my supervisor if they need (b) (6)  
information to respond to the inquiry. I am kept completely out of the loop (unless my  
supervisor has a question).

242 Have received valuable, in-person media training from EPA

243 None

244 NA

245 No comment.

246 The Scientific Integrity Program should be more available to program staff.

247

Balance. When addressing the media, scientists need to convey information in such a  
manner that the listener has an idea of the subject matter being discussed, without having  
an advanced science background. This is a challenge for many scientists, including myself.

248 NONE

249 I don't have any experience and it is not my job description

250

The (b) (6) Communications systems make communication impossible, or at least, very  
difficult to navigate. There are inconsistent rules, a lack of templates, slow response times  
and more. They serve a public affairs role which is different than communications, which is  
sorely needed to share the excellent science of the agency.

251

As a scientist and a manager of scientist, the majority of scientists should not talk to the  
media. This is a very specific interaction that most scientist do not possess.

252 NA

253

On the interviews, we are strongly discouraged from talking to media. I usually don't mind written Q&A's myself, because they are more controlled. But it's clear from management we should not express opinions on even the science (or lack of it) behind regulations. We (my research team) typically WANT to stay away from policy issues, since we don't agree most of the time that the regulations or policies are actually drawn from the science, and there are overt errors in some of the regulatory proposals (like (b) (6), (b) (5)). But we do want and need to talk to media about the good research and tech support that we are doing. We do not feel like management at even the laboratory level has a clue what we really do, and we have caught them misrepresenting our research. Not maliciously, but false because they think they should be guiding us even though they don't know what we really do and they make little effort to find out.

254

Keep scientific integrity apolitical.

255

N/A

256

Policies and procedures are worthless without a change in culture. EPA scientists and professionals have been told (overtly, implied, by making them jump through hoops, etc) for so long that they can't speak freely about scientific information that it will take a lot to change the mindset and generate interest in engaging with the media. Right now it's too much of a lift and not worth the risk/benefit.

257

I think training on how to engage with media, especially on controversial subjects, would be helpful and how to speak in non-technical terms.

258

It looks like a minefield.

259

recognition that we are a huge agency and that trust has been mutilated. We are peppered with those who will choose individual career advancement over protecting the mission of the agency.

260

Continue to be transparent and honesty about findings

<sup>261</sup> In general, most EPA staffed are aware of the need to contact (b) (6) if and when we are contacted by the media; however, training would very helpful and always be appreciated.

<sup>262</sup> Just be transparent about decisions made, policies implemented and how they align with the agency's overall mission.

<sup>263</sup> people who understand the difference btw science and policy people who agree to keep them separate

<sup>264</sup>

It is the explicit policy in (b) (6) that we are not allowed to speak with media. All media requests have to be referred to the (b) (6) and handled through comms/(b) (6) channels. This is probably an appropriate approach in general. However, given how much political influence the previous administration had on all our work this policy had the effect of suppressing and providing misleading information.

<sup>265</sup> More training between scientists and media personnel would be helpful and between media personnel within and outside of the Agency.

<sup>266</sup> I don't know anything about this.

<sup>267</sup>

HQ should run their pronouncements before the workgroup members before internal meetings with the Division Directors or section chiefs. (b) (5), (b) (6)

Yes it does take more time but we can help them deliver a factually correct product.

<sup>268</sup> You all should do behind the science Instagram "takeovers" at EPA labs showing the great work we do.

<sup>269</sup> the (b) (6) in all administrations is better at messaging with the public. Site specific issues/meetings can be left to project managers

<sup>270</sup> N/A

<sup>271</sup> I have no experience addressing the media. I have only experience addressing scientists/researchers in scientific conferences and workshops.

<sup>272</sup> N/A - this is working well in (b) (6).

<sup>273</sup> Scientists need to understand difference between science and policy choice. There may be an impression they do not.